

The inaugural meeting of the new Advisory Board on Human Security

New Board underlines the importance of human security in the COVID-19 era

United Nations, New York, 11 September 2020 - On Friday, 11 September, the new Advisory Board on Human Security (ABHS) held its inaugural meeting via virtual platform. In a video message to the new members, the Secretary-General highlighted that “at a moment when people are threatened on many fronts, human security provides a unifying concept for action towards prevention, sustainable development, and lasting peace.” He urged members to “generate the solutions and support needed to usher in a new era for human security” and lauded the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) as “an instrument for our times and our future.”

Providing opening remarks on behalf of the Government of Japan, which has been a longstanding advocate of human security, His Excellency Ambassador Kimihiro Ishikane, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, noted the great significance of the Board’s discussion of human security against the backdrop of the COVID-19 crisis, which has underscored its relevance now more than ever, and emphasized how human security can help forge the post-crisis world.

The newly appointed board members bring rich and diverse experience, united by a shared commitment to human security and its further advancement in the work of the United Nations and beyond. During their two-year term, the Board will advise the Secretary-General on the strategic orientation of the UNTFHS and ways to promote the human security approach and deepen its understanding and application globally.

The ABHS benefits from the continued membership of Ambassador Knut Vollebaek, the former Foreign Minister of Norway, who was elected Chair for this two-year term having served previously as Chair of the former ABHS. Also returning is Dr. Akihiko Tanaka, President, National Graduate Institute of Policy Studies in Japan. New members include Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme, Ms. Henrietta Fore, Executive Director, United Nations Children’s Fund, Ms. Marianna Costa-Checa, CEO and co-founder, Laboratoria, and Ms. Shuvai Busuman Nyoni, Executive Director, African Leadership Centre. Serving in an ex-officio capacity are Mr. Yukio Takasu, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Human Security, and Ms. Michelle Gyles-McDonnough, Director of the Sustainable Development Unit, Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

At this first meeting, the Board discussed the renewed importance of human security in the face of the multifaceted crisis caused by the COVID pandemic and the urgent need to rethink international and national responses to emerging challenges of the 21st century. They exchanged ideas on how to reinvigorate support for human security and the UNTFHS through taking stock of the many notable achievements of the past 20 years as well as the areas where greater focus would help realize its full potential towards a world where people are free from fear, want and indignity.